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Joint News Release

Joint Public Relations Team

3 p.m., January 11, 2011

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Snow closing in on Delaware

Driving precautions urged; especially during evening and morning commutes

As snow accumulations throughout Delaware become more predictable, New Castle and Kent counties remain under a Winter Storm Warning until 10 a.m., Wednesday morning. Lower predicted snow totals have dropped the designation to a Winter Storm Advisory in Sussex County; also in effect until 10 a.m. Wednesday. Totals in New Castle are likely to reach up to seven inches, with five to six inches forecast for Kent County. Sussex may see as little as one inch in some areas, but accumulation could reach four inches in some locations with higher amounts in western Sussex.

Regardless of snow amounts, the public is cautioned to avoid unnecessary travel, especially later in the evening hours when snow fall is expected to be heaviest. Along the Atlantic coast, rain may fall intermittently and could freeze on roadways as evening temperatures drop. Light snow is predicted to start around evening rush hour, 4:30 to 5 p.m. in Sussex and southern Kent counties. As the storm moves from south to north, snow should be steady in New Castle County between 6 and 7 p.m. With temperatures in the 20s by midnight, all precipitation will be snow.

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Delaware State Police spokesman, Sgt. Paul Shavack, said, "Motorists should be prepared for slippery roads and limited visibilities which make driving conditions difficult. Use caution while driving when approaching intersections and off ramps. Motorists should reduce their normal speed on the highways and secondary roads."

Alison Kirk, spokesperson for the Office of Highway Safety, added, "Driving during snow storms can increase your chances of being involved in a crash because of potential hazards such as low visibility, icy road conditions, snow drifts, and stranded vehicles on or near roadways.

We urge motorists to stay home and off the roads during snow storms and let the snow plows and salt trucks clear the roads before venturing out. If you must be on the roads take precaution."

If you have to drive in snowy conditions, Kirk said drivers should allow themselves extra time to reach their destination. She said drivers need to leave themselves plenty of room between vehicles allowing more room to stop. When stopping, she advises braking gently to avoid skidding. She also reminds drivers that they should drive with headlights on in bad weather conditions so they can be seen by other motorists.

Snowfall is predicted to taper off by day break Wednesday, however, everyone should monitor weather and road conditions before the morning commute hours.

As the storm becomes heavier and snow reaches measurable levels, the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) will commence plowing operations. Major routes will be given the highest priority to be open and passable.

DelDOT spokesman Jim Westhoff said, "A particular concern is the timing of this storm. As much of the snow is expected to fall overnight, there will be hazardous road conditions for the morning rush hour. Crews will work through the night to reduce these dangers, but motorists should prepare for snow-covered and/or icy roads tomorrow morning."

State and local emergency management officials and response partners continue to monitor the weather and remain in communication with the National Weather Service. The state Emergency Operation Center will be minimally staffed overnight unless conditions change and require additional staffing.

The public is encouraged to use this time to check family emergency supplies and review emergency plans. Although this snow should be out of the state by morning, it's always wise to have a three-day supply of water, food and medications on hand. Emergency officials remind you that the state is not halfway through January 2011, and Delaware is experiencing a third snow.

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